



# Applying for Citizenship: A Guide for Servicemembers



One of the benefits of serving in the United States armed forces is expedited naturalization procedures. Generally, before applying for citizenship, you must have been a permanent resident of the United States (i.e., possess a 'green card') for a number of years. The Immigration and Naturalization Act states that service members who have served honorably for at least one year, or have served on active duty during a specified period of hostilities may apply for expedited naturalization. On July 3, 2002, President Bush signed an executive order making the "war against terrorists of global reach" a specified period of hostilities for the purposes of expedited naturalization. So, any service member, active duty or reservist, serving on active duty after September 11, 2001 may apply for expedited naturalization, provided he or she meets other eligibility requirements set forth by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). These include: enlisting or reenlisting in the United States or a U.S. possession, having good moral character, passing a civics and language test, and taking the Oath of Allegiance to the United States.

The steps for becoming a naturalized citizen under the expedited procedures are as follows:

- 1. Assemble the Application Packet.** In order to become a naturalized citizen, the service member must submit a number of documents to the USCIS (see inset for checklist). The forms can be downloaded from the USCIS website at <http://www.uscis.gov>; the forms are also available at the Legal Assistance Office. Because application fees change regularly, verify the fees on the USCIS website before submitting your application. As of 1 Oct 2004, there will be no fee.
- 2. Verify Your Service Data At Your Personnel Office.** Your personnel office will verify your service data and complete the back of Form N-426. Army personnel in Area II should contact 516<sup>th</sup> PSB at 723-5192; Air Force personnel in Area II should contact Osan AB at 784-1845; and Navy Personnel in Area II should contact PSD at 723-4647.
- 3. Send Background Check And Consent Forms To The Central Clearance Facility (CCF).** The personnel office will send Form G-325B and the release forms from the SF 86 to CCF. CCF will perform a background check and return the results and a completed G-325B to the personnel office.
- 4. All servicemembers filing for expedited naturalization must send application packets to the following address:**

US Citizenship and Immigration Services  
Nebraska Service Center  
P.O. Box 87426  
Lincoln, NE 68501-7426

Failure to send all documents, or sending your packet to the wrong address, will significantly delay the processing of your application. Also, if your address changes after you have sent in the application, immediately send in Form AR-11, Change of Address Form, to the USCIS.

- 5. Wait for USCIS to schedule your interview.** The USCIS will confirm receipt of your citizenship application and inform you that your interview date will be within the next year. In most cases, you will be scheduled for an interview within six months. Approximately six weeks before your interview, the USCIS will send you an interview notice with the date, time and location of the interview.
- 6. The interview.** Arrive on time! If you are a no-show, the USCIS will administratively close your case. If you do not reopen your case within one year, your application will be denied. Bring any documents requested by the USCIS in the interview notification. If you do not bring the necessary documents, your application may be delayed or rejected. The USCIS will review your documents, inquire about the information contained in your application, if any, and administer the English and civics tests. The English test will measure your ability to read, write, and speak English. The civics test will test your knowledge and understanding of the U.S. government and U.S. history and will consist of a verbal or written set of multiple-choice questions. For sample exams and study guides please visit <http://uscis.gov/graphics/services/natz/require.htm>. Write down the name of the USCIS officer who conducted your interview for future reference.
- 7. The USCIS decision.** After your interview, your application will be approved, continued, or denied. If your application is approved, you may take the Oath of Allegiance the same day, or request to take the oath on another day. If your

application is continued, usually for failing the English or civics test, you may be required to appear for another interview in 60-90 days or to provide additional documents. If the USCIS denies your application, you will receive written notice explaining the reasons why. You may request a hearing to appeal the USCIS decision to deny your application by filing Form N-336, Request for Hearing Proceedings under Section 336 of the Act.

**8. Take the Oath.** After the USCIS approves your application, you must attend a ceremony to take the Oath of Allegiance. If you take the oath at some later date after your interview, you will receive Form N-445, Notice of Naturalization Oath Ceremony. If you cannot attend the ceremony on your scheduled date, return form N-445, with a letter explaining why you cannot attend and request a new date. Also, if your religious beliefs prevent you from using the words, "so help me God," you may request an alternate oath. Be prepared to provide documentation from your religious organization explaining its beliefs and stating that you are a member in good standing. If more than a day has passed between your interview and the ceremony, carefully complete the questions on the back of Form N-445, and bring it to the ceremony. Also, bring your Permanent Resident Card (a.k.a, green card) to the ceremony, because you must forfeit it in order to take the oath and receive your certificate of naturalization.

**9. Receive the Certificate of Naturalization.** Congratulations! You are now a U.S. citizen. After you have taken the oath, you will receive a Certificate of Naturalization, which is your proof of citizenship. You should obtain a passport soon after the naturalization ceremony, because it is easier to carry around than the Naturalization certificate. If you lose your Certificate of Naturalization, it could take up to one year to obtain a replacement.

**Conclusion.** Remember, naturalization is a slow process. But, if you complete the paperwork properly, you could be taking the Oath of Citizenship within a year. If you have any questions regarding naturalization procedures, visit Application Procedures at <http://uscis.gov/graphics/services/natz/howapply.htm>, or A Guide to Naturalization at <http://uscis.gov/graphics/services/natz/English.pdf>, or Naturalization Information for Military Personnel <http://www.uscis.gov/graphics/services/natz/MilitaryBrochure7.pdf>

You can also contact your local Client Legal Services Office. Army Legal Assistance attorneys can advise you on rights and responsibilities you have in your particular case. Army Legal Assistance services in Korea are available to all active duty service members, retirees, DOD civilians, dependents, and some reservists and DOD contractor personnel.

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#### **FORMS and OTHER DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR NATURALIZATION:**

<b>N-400</b>	Application for Naturalization and supporting documents
<b>G-325B</b>	Biographical Information for Military Members (required if you have ever been in the US Armed Forces)
<b>N-426</b>	Request for Certificate of Military or Naval Service
<b>Standard Form 86 (SF 86)</b>	Authorization for Release of Information
<b>FD 258</b>	Fingerprint Card – obtained at the Provost Marshal's Office on Camp Kim, 724-7211
<b>Color Photos (2)</b>	<b>2 x 2</b> Standard Passport-Style Photos—obtained at TSAK, Camp Coiner, 724-3296
<b>Filing Fee</b>	<b>Free</b> (as of <b>October 1, 2004</b> ), submit money order or cashier's check payable to the USCIS
<b>Memorandum</b>	Short note stating which installation the application is being mailed from, and when and where the servicemember would like to be interviewed

**Notes:** READ ALL INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY. YOU MUST ACCURATELY AND COMPLETELY FILL OUT THE FORMS THAT ARE APPLICABLE TO YOU. Incomplete or inaccurate forms will cause delay in processing your packet. Despite what the forms say, it is acceptable to send copies of the documents to the USCIS, even without the certification form. Be prepared to provide originals at your interview with the USCIS. DO NOT SEND ORIGINAL GREEN CARD CERTIFICATES, OR CASH.

Yongsan Client Legal Services Office, Bldg 4106, room 229 (ACS building). Please call 738-6841/8111 for an appointment. Office hours: M, Tu, W, F 0900-1600 and Th 1300-1500.
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